BLIND DICTAPHONE OPERATORS AND TYPISTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Reprinted from the
OUTLOOK FOR THE BLIND
December, 1924

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Blind Dictaphone Operators and Typists in the United States and Canada

The Pioneer Blind Dictaphone Operator

FANNIE D. OPDYKE
Albuquerque, New Mexico

FANNIE D. OPDYKE

FIFTEEN years ago the field of dictaphone operating presented to the blind worker a problem not unsimilar to that which greets the explorer who undertakes to conquer an untracked wilderness.

No one had gone that way before. No well-defined trail lay ahead. No tangible evidence indicated the dangers and pitfalls of the untried way. A single weapon existed with which to meet any eventuality that might arise. That weapon was the courage of a great conviction, the conviction

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that a way *could* be made through the wilderness and out into the open veldts beyond, where the peace and plenty of lucrative industry awaited those who should follow after.

Like all true explorers, Fannie D. Opdyke, pioneer dictaphone operator of the East, took up the weapon of her courage and proceeded to beat out a path for herself. Educated at the New York State School for the Blind at Batavia, Miss Opdyke undertook to work as a dictaphone operator in the office of the reporter of the Condemnation Court of New York City, before she had ever seen a dictaphone. She commenced at eight dollars a week, with the understanding that increased efficiency would mean increased salary. With no knowledge of the detailed and involved technicalities of legal documents, with insufficient training and meagre assistance, Miss Opdyke determinedly mastered her New York job and held it for six years.

A decision to try new fields led her to accompany a friend to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where they together adventured as public stenographers for two years. In 1917, Miss Opdyke obtained her present position with the legal department of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company of Albuquerque, New Mexico. She transcribes all the correspondence and legal papers for the company's three lawyers, and writes that she finds the work congenial and easy.

Between Miss Opdyke's first attempts in the New York court reporter's office and her present success, there lies the path through the untracked wilderness of pioneer days. Valiant and true, she discounted the difficulties that were everywhere around her. Will not some of you who read this article take up your weapon of courage and adventure forth into hitherto untried paths? Who knows what rich and beautiful country may open up before you? Who knows what unguessed army of workers may follow after? Go in and Win.

Conviction and Hope

BEATRICE N. HANRAHAN
McKinlay, Stone & Mackenzie, New York

"I gladly join you in any message of encouragement you may send to those blind persons who are thinking of taking up dictaphone work."

Such a message carries conviction and hope, coming as it does from one who daily dictates to a blind dictaphone operator. It indicates satisfaction with the particular operator and belief in the ability of trained blind workers to meet the requirements of dictaphone operating in general.

BEATRICE HANRAHAN

Miss Beatrice N. Hanrahan is employed by the firm of McKinlay, Stone and Mackenzie, New York publishers, and her work is perfectly satisfactory. During the slow season of work, Miss Hanrahan turns out forty or fifty letters a day, but during weeks of rush, the average letter output is seventy or eighty per day. She regards tabulating and the estimating and adjusting of margins as the chief technical difficulties for the blind dictaphone operator, but like many another operator, she has faced these difficulties and overcome them.

Miss Hanrahan advocates much preparatory practice in letter form and construction, and believes that unusual and technical terms should be introduced early in the training period.

The following letter tells how Miss Hanrahan's work is regarded by one of her dictators.

McKINLAY, STONE &
MACKENZIE
New York

Dear Miss Hanrahan:

I gladly tell you how greatly I appreciate the excellence of dictaphone work you have done and are doing for me. Without your aid I should have to put in many hours at one-handed work on my typewriter.

The letters you write are as neat in every way as those written by those who can see. You never need to use an eraser. This shows that losing your sight has in a wonderful degree increased your accuracy of touch, spelling, and punctuation, and it has certainly given you a remarkable keenness of hearing, for you seldom misinterpret even a singular for a plural.

What you have done for yourself in this particular direction should be an inspiration to those who are blind, and I have no doubt but that you have, in a similar degree, developed other faculties.

I gladly join you in any message of encouragement you may send to those blind persons who are thinking of taking up dictaphone work.

Grateful to you for your expert work. I am,

Yours sincerely,
G. M. HOSSACK.

Qualities Which Make for Success

By LOTTIE MACLEOD LUCE
St. James Hotel, Denver, Colorado

When I first became blind some fifteen years ago, I regarded my loss as an irreparable calamity, principally because I thought I would have to sit in idleness and relinquish all that had formerly made life so happy—work, friends, loving home service and the many pleasures I had enjoyed.

I had never heard of any success attained by the blind, and the future

LOTTIE MACLEOD LUCE

was indeed dark to me. I had been the public stenographer in one of the leading hotels of Denver for several years and the loss of the position I loved so well caused the deepest pain and anguish, but I finally consented to put a substitute in my place, with the understanding that I should return when again able to do my work.

I began to familiarize myself with the keyboard of the typewriter, for I had not been a touch operator. To my great joy, I was soon able to write by touch. I knew that confidence in myself would win the confidence of the public and make a success of the business. In a few months I returned to my position in the hotel, convinced that I could do the work, and the years of success which have followed have proved that I was not mistaken.

I purchased the best standard single-key typewriter on the market and began to work for accuracy and speed. I practiced all day long for months and even years, criticizing my work severely, each day seeking for higher speed and perfection. Practicing continuously as I did, I found no difficulty in doing the regular work that came in and which was easily taken on the machine by direct dictation.

Early in the autumn of 1917, I went to Washington, D. C., to join the army of war workers. Soon after, I secured a position as public stenographer in a leading hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue, near the White House. I was in this pleasant office for about three years, and then returned to Denver. It was a great pleasure to me while in Washington to meet many officers and enlisted men of our army and navy from all parts of the United States, as well as officers and representatives of the allied countries, who came to my office to prepare their contracts, specifications, business letters, etc. While I missed the sight of their vari-colored uniforms and insignia of rank, I found compensation in taking their dictation and in the friendly talks and kindly expressions of appreciation for which none was too busy or hurried.

I shall always be glad that I had the opportunity of meeting so many Eastern and Southern people during the war. I found them eminently gracious, courteous and kind.

Shortly after my return to Denver, I again opened an office in the St. James Hotel, where I am at present located.

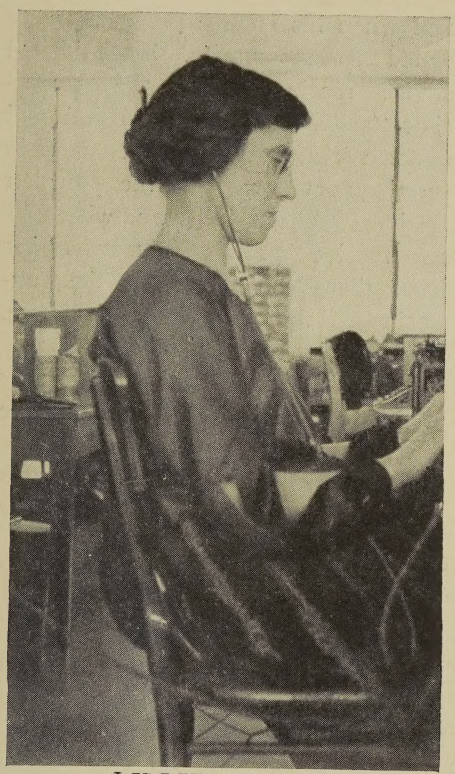
I attribute much of my success to unceasing hard work and a constant desire to please; also to the loving sympathy, encouragement and appreciation of many friends and acquaintances. I have never entertained the thought of failure for a second, but from the start I have said: *"I will not fail."* Persistent, conscientious endeavor invariably leads to success.

The Fastest Operator in the Company

LILLIE NELSEN
Montgomery Ward & Company,
St. Paul, Minnesota

Miss Lillie Nelsen of St. Paul, Minnesota, holds the record as the fastest and most accurate ediphone operator in the stenographic and typing department of the Montgomery Ward Company. Miss Nelsen, although relying entirely on her sense of touch, has set the pace for her co-workers for the past four months. She commenced work in her present position

in August, 1921, and although she lives an hour's ride away, she has never been late.



LILLIE NELSEN

MONTGOMERY WARD & CO.
ST. PAUL

November 3, 1924.

Mr. Charles B. Hayes
American Foundation for the Blind,
New York City, New York.

Dear Mr. Hayes:

I have your letter of October 30th asking for a statement as to Miss Nelsen's qualifications as an ediphone operator.

Miss Nelsen has been on our payroll since August, 1921. After going over her records and talking personally with her supervisor, it gives me pleasure to inform you that her work is entirely satisfactory. Among the twenty ediphone operators we now have working she ranks second from the viewpoint of output and accuracy. We do not allow Miss Nelsen to address her own mail, due to the fact that initials, names, and addresses are hard to get over the machine. Miss Nelsen seems satisfied, and certainly causes no trouble as far as the general running of the office is concerned.

I trust that this information is complete enough to be helpful to you in your work, the result of which I will look forward to with interest.

Yours very truly,
Theo. Driscoll
TGD:TS *Personnel Manager.*

Fitting the Job

D. OLIN ROBERTSON
Maryland Casualty Company
Boston, Massachusetts

Some years ago, a six-year-old boy lay tossing in a darkened room. He was in the grip of one of the dread child-diseases—measles. When the little lad recovered from his illness, he found himself in a new and darkened world, from which the sight of dear familiar faces, much loved playthings, and all the varied and accustomed aspect of his own small environment had vanished into nothingness, and in their places had come seemingly disembodied voices, a groping for the *feel* of the little horse and wagon, instead of the ready recognition of its vivid red gleam, and a consciousness was born that new dangers lurked in every corner and turn of once well-known surround-

ings. Paralysis of the optic nerve had occurred during the illness, and the child had become one of the followers of the "dark trail."

As soon as a process of comparative readjustment had commenced, the boy was placed in the kindergarten department of Perkins' Institution, Watertown, Massachusetts, from which he progressed into the regular high school course at Perkins. He was particularly fond of literary subjects, and in pursuance of a possible future college career, enrolled in the Lynn Classical High School, there to supplement such work as he had already accomplished at Perkins. After two years at the Lynn school, he was ready for college, but ontoward circumstances interfered, and he turned to face the problem of earning a daily living.

While at Perkins, Olin Robertson had learned to use the typewriter, and when his college prospects were ended so summarily, he followed advice received from the Massachusetts Division of the Blind and undertook a three months' course in speed typewriting at the Burdett Business College in Lynn, where he also received practice in transcribing from the dictaphone. At the conclusion of the three months' course, The Division of the Blind was able to place him as dictaphone operator in the Boston Claim Division of the Maryland Casualty Company. He was accepted there as an experiment for three days, for which time he

D. OLIN ROBERTSON

agreed to serve gratuitously, but at the end of a successful week of work, he was agreeably surprised to find full pay for the trial days in his pay envelope.

Mr. Robertson has been in his present position for the past five years. His work is the transcription of reports of investigations made by the company's claim adjusters, and a certain amount of correspondence relative to such adjustments.

Concerning the problem of placing a blind dictaphone operator in the right position, Mr. Robertson says:

"I think that the method of giving one's time to an employer is a fair and reasonable one, as there is a natural uncertainty as to whether or not the blind employee can do the particular work required, and it is necessary for the employee to adjust himself to the office work and to the office force. I enjoy my own work as there is considerable variety in the kinds of claims. My salary has been increased several times since I commenced working, and I now receive a little more than double the amount received when I entered the firm's employ."

MARYLAND CASUALTY CO.

October 14th, 1924.

Mr. Charles B. Hayes, American Foundation for the Blind, 41 Union Square West, New York.

Dear Sir:—

Replying to your letter of October 10th, I beg to advise that Mr. Robertson, who has been a dictaphone operator in this office since February, 1919, has done, ever since his employment by us, highly satisfactory work. In fact, he is so much better than the ordinary dictaphone operator who has sight that we figure that he does anywhere from one and a half to twice as much work as the operators whom we have employed and who are able to see.

His work is of the highest quality, both as regards neatness and speed.

Very truly yours,

EDWARD I. TAYLOR

Mgr. Boston Claim Div.

Winning the Confidence of a Skeptical Employer

MARIE WARD
Lessman Practical Business School,
San Francisco, California

"Miss Ward to see you, Mr. Lessman." The busy executive of Lessman's Practical Business School looked up to find a frail looking light-haired girl standing near his desk.

MARIE WARD

She had come to apply for the position of dictaphone operator and typist and was highly recommended as well trained and capable, but—*could* she do the work? Mr. Lessman had had no experience with persons without sight and was decidedly doubtful of the advisability of employing a blind girl. Eventually, he decided to give Miss Ward a trial, and the decision has not been regretted.

"I was employed simply on trial," says Miss Ward, "and the first few weeks were rather difficult ones, as I was conscious that doubt of my ability existed. Gradually, however, Mr. Lessman came to have more confidence in me, and I am now working in the capacity of his secretary.

At first my work consisted of transcribing cylinders which came from outside firms, and, when any near-by concern had an overflow of work that could not be handled conveniently by their own operators, the extra cylinders were sent to the school for transcription. My chief early difficulty lay in that I readily forgot the last word written previous to an interruption of my work. I overcame this trouble by refusing to attend to an interruption until I had placed the dictaphone needle immediately after the last word. I am now quite free from the inconvenience of having to ask others for my last sentence or word.

"Dictaphone work can be done by any equipped blind person, as far as transcribing and typing are concerned," says Miss Ward. "The larger the place of business, the more advantages there are for the blind worker.

"I believe that much can and should be done to strengthen the confidence of the business world in the ability of blind persons to do eminently successful work as dictaphone operators and typists."

LESSMAN'S PRACTICAL BUSINESS SCHOOL
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

November 12, 1924

Dear Mr. Hayes:

It gives me great pleasure to reply to your letter of November 6, in which you ask concerning the services of Miss Marie Ward. Miss Ward was trained in practical Dictaphone or Ediphone work by this School, and since the completion of such training about nine months ago, she has been serving us satisfactorily and faithfully.

The question that naturally comes in the minds of sighted persons is whether blind persons are adapted for office work and whether, if given an opportunity, they will work out on a par with sighted operators. To these doubting Thomases I would say: You are overlooking a good bet if you don't give the blind the consideration that they deserve. My experience with Miss Ward is that the blind are dependable, extremely accurate in their work and produce from twenty-five to fifty percent more in work than the average sighted Dictaphone or Ediphone operator.

Miss Ward is 99.44% perfect in her work and when you have a person of such efficiency in your employ, you are glad to say that her services are more than satisfactory and she is deserving of every possible consideration. She is a credit to those who are similarly handicapped.

Cordially yours,
HOMER C. LESSMAN, *Manager.*

Caught, But Not Crushed

By Arnold Hiller
Spencer Trask Company, New York City

ARNOLD HILLER

IF you have ever bought stocks on the margin, and, with your last dollar up, have been caught in a declining market which continued to go down, down, down—until the bottom fell out, you may, to a certain degree, understand the position in which I was placed in 1914. Although I had not been crushed in a "bear" market, I had been the victim of an explosion which had left me, both physically and financially, almost ready for the hands of the receivers.

At the age of twenty-four, with shattered nerves and the light of day blotted out, I set about the task of retrieving my losses. For about eighteen months I tried to adjust myself to the new state of affairs and to learn what I could, which included acquiring knowledge of the typewriter and dictaphone. At the end of this period, I went to New York, and shortly afterward, secured a position with a court stenographer. This work did not last for long, but I gained much valuable experience, supplemented later on by a course in one of the local business colleges. In the fall of the same year, I located with one of the large firms

of investment bankers in Wall Street, and it has been my privilege to serve there for the past eight years.

I have received ample assurance that my work has been entirely satisfactory. From time to time, little incidents have occurred which have been a source of much satisfaction to me. I will mention one of these in order that you may more clearly appreciate what I mean:

Some time ago, one of the bond salesmen came rushing into our department and asked "Who is A. H.?" I began to feel a little uneasy, for those were my initials and I wondered if something had gone wrong with one of my letters. You may imagine my relief when he said that one of his best clients had recently received from our firm a letter, the appearance of which had so impressed him, that he wished to get a typewriter of the particular make on which that letter had been written. Our salesman was informed that all the machines in the department were the same—Underwood No. 5.

Based upon my own experience, I would say that any person without sight, who has received thorough training, should be able to qualify as a dictaphone operator, provided that he agrees with Carlyle that "a man is born to expend every particle of strength that God has given him in doing the work he finds he is fit for, in standing up to it to the last breath."

Three Salary Increases in Two Years

By Margaret Foley

The Iron Age Publishing Company
New York City

When I came to New York to secure employment as a dictaphone operator, I arranged for an interview with Miss Mary V. Hun, Vice-Chairman of the New York State Commission for the Blind. Prior to coming to New York, I had taken a three months' course in typing and dictaphone operating at the Wendell Phillips High School in Chicago, so Miss Hun suggested that I obtain permission to practice under the supervision of Miss Helen Smith, who has charge of the Typewriting Department of the New York Association for the Blind. Through this excellent arrangement I was able to keep my work up to par and to profit by Miss Smith's helpful suggestions.

In February, 1923, a month after my arrival in the great metropolis, an arrangement was made between the Commission and a Dictaphone Company, whereby girls then training for dictaphone work were enabled to take the prescribed test given by the Company to prospective applicants for positions. I passed the test creditably, and the Dictaphone Company recommended me for the position of typist and dictaphone operator at The Iron Age Publishing Company.

Our company publishes several trade papers relative to iron and steel. The Stenographic Department employs about fifty young ladies, supervised by Mrs. Julia C. Allen, a most capable person, who takes a personal interest in each member of the department. When Mrs. Allen learned that I lacked sight, she suggested that I give the work a fair trial, with the understanding that eligibility would depend solely upon ability to put out the work and on the attitude of my co-workers toward me.

In February, 1925, I shall have

been here two years. I have felt quite at home from the first hour, and have received genuine and generous cooperation from the entire organization. I thoroughly enjoy my work and have experienced none of the nervous strain considered an inevitable part of dictaphone operating. As there is frequent opportunity to handle cylinders for various departments, the work does not grow monotonous, and the exhilarating company of bright young girls, together with the many social activities pursued in this organization, make my surroundings happy and congenial. I have thus far received three substantial raises in salary.

Every blind dictaphone operator should figure out little formulae helpful to the particular line of work. I early discovered methods of tabulating, addressing envelopes, quoting paragraphs and arranging interoffice work. Thus, much time and material has been saved. I have learned to regulate the set-up of different kinds of letters by hearing them through, and arranging the carbons while listening to dictation from the dictaphone. In the course of a day's work our office handles as many as seven varieties of stationery, and, when one is without sight, means must be devised for discerning the kind of paper to be used by the different departments. I use a portfolio, and insert the paper between the leaves, thus separating them.

Mrs. Allen has solved the problem of our weekly campaign letters for me. The letters are dictated into the dictaphone, care being taken to mention the scale point at which each line begins. This makes the set-up of form letters a matter of certainty, so that one original dictation is sufficient. I have the letter proofread, copy it in Braille, and am then able to write an indefinite number of similar letters.

The attitude of this organization toward me is convincing proof that employers are now ready to give us a fair trial. Let us meet the opportunities which they afford us.

IRON AGE PUBLISHING CO.
239 West Thirty-ninth Street
New York

October 27, 1924.

Mr. Charles B. Hayes,
41 Union Square West,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Hayes:

It is a privilege to send you information regarding our blind operator, Miss Margaret Foley. Perhaps there is no better way of showing her ability than to open my record book and give you her production for three days this month:

Date	Dictaphone (Cylinders from Various Dictators)	Letters and Envelopes
October 21	8	48 letters—48 env.
October 22	6	41 letters—41 env.
October 23	6	43 letters—43 env.

These are just days that I have opened to by chance and therefore I want to say that there are days when her production is greater. For instance, one morning not long ago I picked up the work from Miss Foley's desk and she had transcribed 35 letters in 3½ hours. When one considers that these letters are on an average

of between 25 and 30 six-inch lines, carrying two carbons, pink and yellow, I think that the record is one to be proud of for any operator even with sight, for they are beautifully balanced on the page, the margins wide and even.

Personally I think Miss Foley is an inspiration, not only to the members of the department and organization, but by her good cheer and smiles to many who call for interviews and visits. Her cooperation is proved each day by her punctuality and faithful performance of all duties that come to her. She is the only one in this department of 50 who has been neither late nor absent so far this season.

The sympathy which may have been instrumental in engaging Miss Foley has been amply rewarded, for she has magnificently justified herself which is proved by her presence on the list with those who are to receive early increases in salary.

Yours very truly,
THE IRON AGE,
Julia C. H. Allen,
In Charge.

MARGARET FOLEY

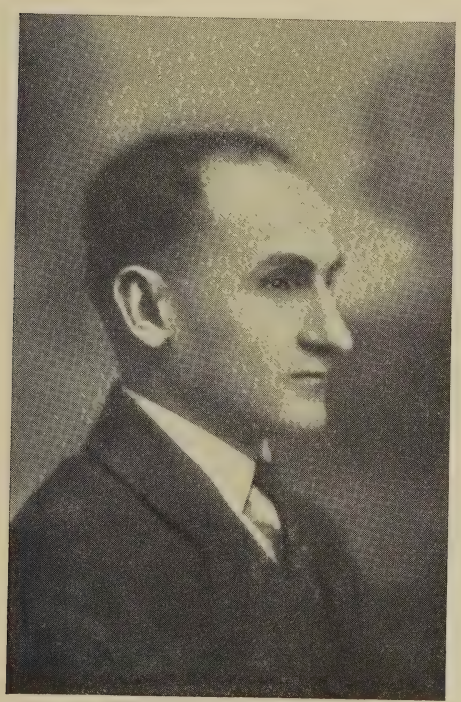
The Crucial Test

By David Sillman
Blumenthal Brothers
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

When a blind person makes his début into industrial circles as an "extraordinary prodigy" or as a "poor duffer," the scales of success are balanced against him. With due respect to the prodigy and with consideration for the duffer, I do not hesitate to say that such a début is detrimental

to the normalization of opinions regarding the blind, and is decidedly unfavorable to the assimilation of the blind by the world of the sighted.

Heretofore, employers have hesitated to employ blind workers because, in their mind, there has been no basis of equalization between the world of blindness and the world of sight. Now that the American Foundation for the Blind has undertaken to act as an equalizer in this situation, it is hoped that much unnecessary misunderstanding will be thrown into the discard.



DAVID SILLMAN

Concerning dictaphone work—I believe that a considerable degree of speed and accuracy are necessary prerequisites, and I maintain that the preliminary training course should include a fair amount of actual and useful work, rather than the haphazard assortment of somewhat elementary material that is sometimes used in business schools. Desultory practice and an unguarded race for speed result in a sense of irresponsibility that is difficult to shake off when serious work begins.

During a conversation with a young man who was taking a commercial course in one of the Philadelphia high schools, I was forcibly impressed when he told me that in the advanced classes make-believe banks and business houses are established and genuine business procedure observed. Such a method might be advantageously employed in the advanced classes in schools for the blind. Each advanced class could be regarded as a particular department of some business concern, and the various classes could conduct correspondence among themselves after the manner of departmental interchange as it exists in large organizations.

In actual office experience I have found the card index system an invaluable aid. Necessary information is written in Braille on the filing cards, which are then filed alphabetically in the drawer or rack. In letter filing —where carbon copies must be filed, I paste a 3 x 5 inch label in the lower left hand corner of the carbon copy, having previously written the needed information thereon in Braille. I must not forget to mention that the pasteboard divisions of the letter file are annotated in Braille characters.

It sometimes devolves upon the blind secretary to solve individual problems connected with his particular work. A broad knowledge of business methods and a thorough acquaintance with general office equip-

ment aids greatly in these circumstances, and obviates the necessity of seeking information which might quite easily have been acquired by the exertion of a minimum amount of effort.

Ability, training, adaptability and courage are the qualities which make for enduring success and sighted people have no corner on their market. Many blind persons are more richly endowed mentally than their sighted contemporaries, and they have a right to expect such recognition as is commensurate with their abilities. Ability, not blindness, is the crucial test.

BLUMENTHAL BROS.
PHILADELPHIA

November 8th, 1924

American Foundation for the Blind,
Gentlemen:

We are in receipt of your letter of November 6th, in reference to Mr. David Sillman.

We found the above mentioned party most excellent in taking dictation and stenographical work; in fact, we consider him a wonder at it. There isn't the least doubt in our minds that in course of a very short time the blind operators will be doing some very fine work. Mr. Sillman has been able lately to do his own filing, and this was his own idea.

Assuring you that we are only too glad to give you the above information, we remain,

Yours truly,
BLUMENTHAL BROS.

Be Conquerors

SUE PARKER EAGAN
Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee

Miss Sue Parker Eagan is now a successful dictaphone operator at Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee.

A year before her graduation from a school for the blind, Miss Eagan bought a typewriter, and, with the aid of her brother, acquired sufficient knowledge of the machine to enable her to use it in all her personal correspondence. Typewriting had not been included in the school for the blind from which she graduated until

SUE PARKER EAGAN

three months prior to her graduation, but with characteristic force of purpose, Miss Eagan had proceeded to make herself conversant with the use of the tool that she would need for her future work.

Miss Eagan had never used a dicta-

phone at the time of her acceptance for the work at Peabody College, but with carefulness and courage, she managed to make the trial period at the college develop into a permanency.

Miss Eagan believes that the public attitude toward blindness should and *must* be changed. Her own words are:

"What the blind need more than anything else is to be treated like other people. We do not want to be set off in a corner by ourselves or looked on as curiosities. We are not abnormal, we are merely handicapped, and handicap is often balanced by excess of ability in other directions. Why not overcome the handicap and use the ability? It can be done. It is done every day. Let us not cringe; rather—let us conquer.

Saves Money

RAYMOND H. MUNIS
DuPont Co., Wilmington, Delaware

Post graduate work in the Industrial Department, following the regular course at the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, enabled Raymond H. Munis to secure work with the DuPont Company of Wilmington, Delaware, where he has been employed as a stenographer since 1918. Mr. Munis is entirely self-supporting and has been able to save money. Preparation has been the key-note and persistence the theme from which success has been evolved for Mr. Munis.

RAYMOND H. MUNIS

Gaining the Goal

HOWARD B. BURRITT
Atlantic Refining Company,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

When the long line of seniors filed into chapel at Pennsylvania University on Commencement Day of June, 1917, Howard B. Burritt was in place in the line. With the rest of his classmates he had passed through all the various phases of college life. With them he had participated in Freshman frolics, Sophomore pranks, Junior "Proms" and Senior suppers. With them he had faced the rigors of examinations and the irony of professors, until, on that June day in 1917, he stood with them to receive the degree that his beloved Alma Mater was ready to confer. The fact that Howard B. Burritt was blind had not caused him to swerve one inch from his determination to earn his sheepskin. He had started out to win it, and win it he did.

Previous to his college career, Mr. Burritt studied at the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind, and graduated therefrom in 1912. In October of the year of his university graduation, he entered the employ of the Atlantic Refining Company as stenographic assistant in the sales department. He takes dictation on the Hall Braille Writer and is an efficient and valued worker. Mr. Burritt is married and is buying his own home.—G. C.

Win a Trial—Then Prove Your Mettle

By MARIE SHAFFER
Burch, Bacon & Denlinger, Attorneys
Akron, Ohio

Dictaphone operating presents a field of opportunity to blind persons. Aside from being an excellent means of affording a livelihood, it serves as a mind developer and character builder, takes one out of a little shut-in world into the larger world of industrial activity, and causes one to rub elbows with thinking, busy human beings.

To those who would become dictaphone operators I would say: "Lay a good foundation upon which to build for your future success. Acquire a thorough working knowledge of English, spelling and punctuation. Familiarize yourself with letter form and construction of correct sentences and paragraphs. Be an efficient typist. Cultivate a first class memory and avoid having to be told the same thing twice. Having done all these things and many more, go to work prepared to take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself. Devise ways and means of doing your own special work in the most capable way possible, with a minimum of trouble for your co-workers. Above all, wear a smile on your lips and carry a song in your heart. Be friendly with every associate and place your employer's interest first.

I do not say that we can do *anything* that sighted persons can do, but I do maintain that we can work out many problems for ourselves, if we are afforded an average chance. Do not blame a possible employer for entertaining a certain amount of doubt as to a blind person's ability. Remember—*he has never seen one work!* Go on and persuade him to give you a trial, and then *prove your mettle.* Do not assume that positions are secured without struggle. In my own case it was only by sheer perseverance

and bulldog tenacity that I secured a week's trial, and for many weeks thereafter I felt that my employers and daily associates regarded me in the light of a curiosity. The day came, however, when I won out, and although my first week's earnings amounted to only $3.65, my present salary is $20.00 per week. I work on a piece basis, and from the beginning, I have striven for accuracy rather than for speed. My dictators say that my spelling is about 100%, punctuation good, and accuracy 98%.

Let me say to other blind girls—opportunity is everywhere about you. *Learn to recognize it.*

BURCH, BACON & DENLINGER
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
Akron, Ohio

November 10, 1924.

Mr. Charles B. Hayes,
41 Union Square West,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of November 6, 1924, we wish to say that Miss Marie Shaffer came into our office several years ago, direct from an institution for the blind.

We at once put her to work writing letters, taking her dictation from a dictaphone. For the first two or three weeks her progress was slow. But she began to develop accuracy and speed, and in a few months was writing from 100 to 135 letters per day.

Her work is absolutely accurate. She is entirely satisfied and we are glad indeed to have her in our office. We feel that such little time as we spent in getting her started in this work, is amply repaid by the efficient work she has done for us in return.

Very truly yours,
BURCH, BACON & DENLINGER

Don't Be Satisfied With the Easy Job

By BERTHA E. HANEY
The Cleveland Hardware Company,
Cleveland, Ohio

Training is an important factor in the work of the dictaphone operator, whether blind or sighted. It was my good fortune to be trained at the Ohio State School for the Blind, Columbus, Ohio. I had the usual grammar and high school courses, with a limited amount of instruction in typing—not with a view to doing dictaphone work—but simply to gain the knowledge for general use.

When the idea of becoming a dictaphone operator occurred to me, I knew that some work must be added to the foundation I already had. On January the twenty-third, 1923, I entered a business school, and there pursued a course in English, typing and spelling. The complete course is supposed to take four months, and at the end of that time a test is exacted. In order to pass, one must be able to take dictation at the rate of forty correct words per minute. I completed the required work in a little less than three months.

On April the sixteenth, 1923, I came to The Cleveland Hardware Company, and have been here ever since. My work has been successful to the point that there has been no criticism, and no suggestion that I do not carry my end of the load.

The path of the blind dictaphone

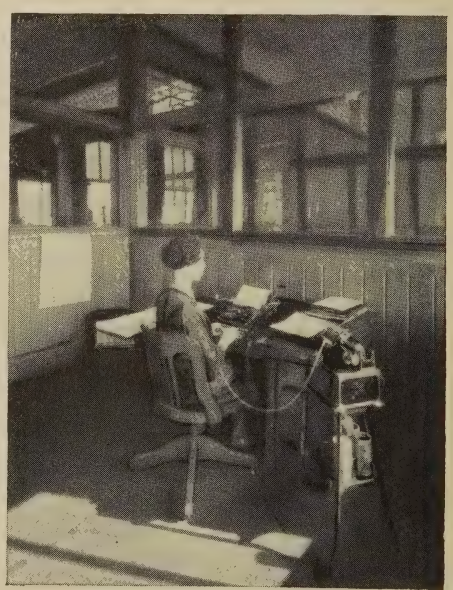
operator is not an easy one, either in learning the job or carrying it on. To the blind who consider dictaphone operating as a possible field of labor I would say—It is possible only to the man or woman of earnest purpose, who is ambitious and determined not to be easily discouraged. *These qualities are essential.*

Much is required of the teacher who attempts to train a blind person to become a dictaphone operator. Personal interest, unfailing patience, kindly persistence and an exacting standard to which the work must be held—all these are the essential qualifications which must be possessed by the successful teacher. It was my lot to fall into the hands of such a teacher, and no record of my work would be complete without its tribute to her.

After the position has been obtained, the crucial test comes with the attitude of fellow workers. In order to insure proper cooperation between blind and sighted workers, it is necessary for the seeing person to supervise the blind co-worker's typing, and the dictator should exercise unusual care in spelling and pronunciation, particularly where unfamiliar words occur, such as names of persons, streets and cities. In our office I have met with such uniform kindness and patience from the beginning that the established feeling of being among friends, not critics, has gone a long way toward making my work a success.

When I finished my course, it was suggested that I seek a place where terms would be simple, letter writing easy and the number of dictators limited. When the present opportunity came, there was grave doubt of my ability to undertake work with a manufacturing concern employing all the phraseology common to such work, with domestic and foreign correspondence, and seven men dictating different types of letters. Much is required in the way of remembering the names of the thousand and one parts of hardware made by our company, and the relation which they bear to the finished article But the satisfaction of conquering the job and adding to my fund of knowledge has more than compensated for the effort put forth.

So—to the blind person seeking work as a dictaphone operator, I would say: "Make sure of your foundation and make yourself as correct an operator as is humanly possible. When that is done and you have some measure of confidence in yourself, seek out work that will require further effort. Do not be satisfied with the "easy job" but take the hard one and master it—the sense of satisfaction which will come to you will be worth much in your mental and moral out-



BERTHA E. HANEY

look on life. Most important of all, keep a careful watch on yourself. Be serene and cheerful, never allow your failures and discouragements to come to the surface. You will gain and keep employment and friends only as you are happy, content in your work and appreciative of the efforts put forth by others in your behalf. Have I set you a hard task? *Such a one is the only kind worth attempting.*

CLEVELAND HARDWARE CO.
CLEVELAND, OHIO

October 28, 1924

Mr. Charles B. Hayes,
Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 21st to Miss Bertha J. Haney has been handed to me. I take it from your letter that you would like an expression from the Company as to whether Miss Haney is perhaps all that she claims for herself. I do not know what she has said but for the Company I want to say that we are very glad to have her with us and that she is entirely satisfactory in every way. She has held her own in every particular, is a faithful and efficient employee—a very good dictaphone operator. We are very glad to write this letter testifying to her real worth.

Yours very truly,
The Cleveland Hardware Co.
Charles E. Adams
President.

Go and Make Your Chance

FREDERICK TANSEY
Of S. S. Pierce Company,
Boston, Massachusetts

Out-going ships en route for Europe and Asia; hurrying passengers pursued by gift-laden stewards with their burdens of "bon voyage" packages; telegraph clerks receiving and sending messages; messenger boys hurrying through bustling traffic; and, behind it all — a blind dictaphone operator telegraphing orders and consignments from his desk in the office of S. S. Pierce, Boston firm of grocers. Has this blind dictaphone operator no part in the activities of world commerce? Think of the train of embarrassing incidents and possible lost customers that would result from an error on his part! Now listen to Mr. Tansey's own account of his work:

I am employed by the S. S. Pierce Company of Boston, Massachusetts, and have been here since January 15th, 1923. Ours is a large grocery concern, and we import many delicacies from Europe. The Correspondence Department in which I work is allied with the Investigating Department. We have a large out-of-town mail order following, and sometimes the order clerks omit articles, include wrong items, or substitute others. Perhaps a shipment is damaged or lost in transit. In all such cases, when a customer reports errors or damage, it is my duty to write the letter of explanation or apology, and to advise the customer concerning the adjustment. Sometimes long, difficult communications are involved. During the summer and after the Christmas holidays we receive the largest number of complaints.

Orders are sent to all parts of New England and to many of the large cities of the United States. Consignments are often damaged or lost, and we enter claim against the railroad or express company. I write the follow-

up letter for claim collection. In caring for correspondence, after writing a letter, if the subject matter to which it refers is still open to further correspondence, I place the letter in a pile of similar ones on my desk, and this pile is later transferred to the pending file; if the subject matter is closed, I place the letter in another pile, for later transference to the permanent file. I have my own records, care for my typewriter and verify the sailing dates of various ships.

Many of our customers request us to send confectionery, cigars, baskets of fruit, and many other items to their ocean-going friends who are sailing for Europe or Asia. If time is insufficient to ship the orders from Boston, I telegraph to a dealer of high reputation, near the point of sailing, and he arranges to send the order to the steamer. I am the only dictaphone operator in my department and have but one dictator. The work is varied and interesting, though involving a great deal of detail.

I hold that there is nothing unusual about my accomplishment. Achievement is a duty. What I have done, others can do, and so I say to all young blind students: "Do not sit back and say you have no chance; go out and *make* your chance."

BOSTON

November 7, 1924

Mr. Charles B. Hayes
American Foundation for the Blind,
Hartford Building, 41 Union Square
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

It is a pleasure to tell you that Frederick Tansey is an exceedingly efficient dictaphone operator.

He is quick and accurate and possesses a keen and retentive memory that greatly enhances his value to his department.

His spirit is very good indeed, and we rate him considerably above the average in dictaphone work.

Incidentally, you may be interested to know that he has earned an increase in wages which is to become effective today.

Yours very truly,
S. S. PIERCE CO.
H. H. HUNTER,
General Manager

How I Met a Difficulty

By MARTHA BOWERS
Boy Scout Headquarters, New York

Remember, the world isn't waiting for you. You are only one of thousands whom our colleges and universities send forth year after year. If you want anything—go after it. There are few who realize the weight and truth of the above thought at the time of their graduation, but, once they are "out in the world" it does not take long for the full significance of the words to be felt. Their meaning came to me with double force, when, a few weeks after my graduation from college, I came to live in New York—an utter stranger—not only to the city, but to the state. The sense of loneliness, added to my sightless condition, made it doubly hard for me to obtain work, but I was determined to "go after it."

I knew nothing of the various organizations for the blind, and, when I did hear of them, I doubted their willingness to use their influence on behalf of someone about whom they knew nothing, and who, coming from

another state, had no claim on them as an established resident of New York. I made vain attempts to secure teaching in a private school; answered advertisements for dictaphone operators; applied at various employment agencies—all to no avail. Finally, the New York State Commission for the Blind sent me the announcement that a test in dictaphone operating would be given by the Dictaphone Sales Corporation. I sat for the examination and passed it.

After weeks of waiting, the Commission told me of a prospective opening and gave me an opportunity to gain actual experience in routine office work. I practiced under the supervision of the regularly employed dictaphone operator of the Commission. She was herself without sight and was thus able to understand my problems and answer my questions. At the end of three weeks of work in the Commission office I learned that the prospective opening was closed to me, as the firm that had promised it felt that it could not afford the expense. I was indeed discouraged—but—I wasn't going to give up.

Another month passed before the Commission told me of a possible position in an office where the Oliver typewriter was used. I had never had experience in operating the Oliver machine, but did not intend to let the mere matter of an unfamiliar typewriter interfere with my prospects. The Commission permitted me to practice on an Oliver which I mastered. My efforts were not in vain, for the following week I became a dictaphone operator at the headquarters office of the Boy Scouts of America.

My first day was filled with the general excitement incidental to a new position. At first my employers and fellow workers were almost afraid to question me or to make suggestions. Now—the same attitude is shown toward me as toward any of the other employees. A splendid spirit of understanding was apparent from the beginning. For instance—all correspondence is stamped with the date and the initials of the operator. In order to facilitate matters, I was given a regular date stamp on which my initials had been placed. This may seem a trifling help, but, coming on the second day after my arrival at the office, it was a source of great encouragement and made me feel that those under whom I was working were anxious to have me succeed.

A certain element of skepticism was revealed about some of my work, and this attitude gave still greater force to my determination to succeed. When I suggested making my own enclosures just as the other girls did, I was told: "Oh, there are too many enclosures. Just put a memo on the letters and I will attend to that." When certain form paragraphs were asked for I proposed that I make my own copy for future use—"No, just write that part of the letter that is dictated and I will have one of the other girls insert the necessary paragraph," I was advised.

I understood the spirit in which these offers of assistance were made, but I did not wish to cause any exceptions to be made in my case. When I explained my feelings to my employers, I was given every opportunity to devise ways and means to accomplish my desired aim—to work

absolutely on a par with the other girls.

The solution of the problem of enclosures was an easy matter. I used Braille characters to indicate the form number and purpose of the various application blanks, as well as the number of any accompanying blanks that were to be enclosed with them. I settled the matter of form paragraphs easily by making duplicates in Braille.

The greatest difficulty experienced was the matter of names and addresses. Various departments have their own card catalogues with the names and local addresses of our Scout Executives. As there are some five or six hundred of these officials, ny suggestion that I make my own card catalogue was discouraged. I finally overcame the objection and transcribed a complete alphabetically-filed state catalogue. This has proved indispensable. All minor details soon adjusted themselves. At present I am required to ask a minimum number of questions, most of which are relative to information about which any operator would have to inquire.

We who—without sight—expect to be given a place in industry, where we may work on an equal basis with the sighted, must see that the quantity, quality and efficiency of our work is equal to that of our co-workers. We must exert great effort. *We must obtain results.*

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

November 20, 1924

My dear Mr. Hayes:

It is a source of great pleasure to me to be able to tell you and anyone else who is interested in the wonderful work performed by Miss Martha Bowers, a totally blind dictaphone operator in our employ. Miss Bowers has been with us since May, 1923, and has developed far beyond our most sanguine expectations.

Miss Bowers has been able to meet all our difficult requirements of making enclosures and keeping her own record of names and addresses by means of her own system, together with the Braille System.

Very sincerely yours,

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA,

A. M. HUNT.

Steady Employment

GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN
R. G. Dun and Company
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Satisfactory service, steady employment and self-support. Such is the record of George Chamberlain, dictaphone operator at the R. G. Dun Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and graduate of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind.

Mr. Chamberlain has been employed by Dun and Company since his graduation from the Pennsylvania Institution in 1919 and a recent report from his employers is as follows: "Have had no trouble with him whatsoever. His work is excellent; we prize him highly and are well satisfied with him in every way."

The report is brief, but highly satisfactory in every way.

A Hundred Per Cent Increase in Twenty Months of Service

By Edward E. Breiter
New York

Being endowed with a fairly good retentive memory, I can readily recall that at about the age of twelve, definite ideas as to how I was going to earn my livelihood some day commenced to take root. I seemed instinctively to know that one thing was of prime importance if I hoped to earn a good living, and that was to set about acquiring a substantial education as a foundation.

Shortly before graduation from Public School 157, Brooklyn, where the special class for the blind was then in charge of the much esteemed and beloved Dr. Margaret Meyers, I was encouraged and spurred on to higher education. Arrangements were made for me to have my initial instruction in dictaphone transcription work on Saturday mornings. Unfortunately, this course consisted wholly of court testimonial work.

However, upon graduation from the De Witt Clinton High School, in February, 1918, Miss Frances E. Moscrip, then Inspector of Classes for the Blind in the Public Schools, thought it to be the part of wisdom for me to supplement my knowledge of dictaphone operating by taking a business course in dictaphoning at the Employment Office of the Dictaphone Corporation, and accordingly she made the necessary arrangements. After my third day at the Employment Office, I was pronounced efficient enough to hold a dictaphone position in any high-class office. This proved to me that I must have received excellent training under my former supervision.

My first position as a dictaphone operator with the American Red Cross for Crippled and Disabled Soldiers—was found for me by a sales representative, Mr. C. R. Fox, of the Dictaphone Corporation.

My second position was with a dress house. Here I received twelve dollars weekly. At the end of the third day of employment, I went home with a severe attack of influenza and returned in ten days only to find that my position had been filled during my enforced vacation. However, two days later, I was sent for, paid for the time that I had lost and increased three dollars in my salary. This proved to me that I had convinced my employer that I was more competent in every detail than my sighted competitor who had filled the position in my absence.

At the end of my twentieth month of service with this concern, I was receiving twelve dollars weekly for a half week's work. In other words, my salary had doubled. It became necessary for me to make arrangements to work half of each day owing to the fact that I had entered upon my college career at the New York College of Chiropractics.

For the first six months at college I followed out this plan of work and study. However, later on, my note business grew so rapidly at college that I was obliged to give my entire day to it. You see I utilized my knowledge of typewriting in the form of cutting stencils, and my sweetheart, who is now my wife, mimeographed them. The earnings from this source in a large measure made it possible

for me to work my way through college.

After being out of college for about a year and a half, I found it necessary to return to my former line of endeavor in order to finance myself through the transitional period—until such time as I shall have built up a practice large enough to make it possible for me to remain in my office most of the time and devote my whole heart and soul to that for which I have striven so hard.

In conclusion, let me say that there are several needed assets for a blind Dictaphone Operator:

1. It is vital that a blind operator have a thorough command of the English language—in other words, a large vocabulary.
2. It is equally important that he be an accurate speller.
3. It is highly essential that a blind operator be properly trained to arrange the letters in good style and form on the sheet
4. Personal neatness and promptness might well be mentioned as a fourth consideration.

If I were an employer contemplating the taking on of a blind dictaphone operator, I should look for the foregoing qualifications and attempt to ascertain where the applicant had received his training. Sometimes it happens that a poorly or improperly trained blind operator gets out into the field and is fortunate enough to secure employment for a little while. However, his inefficiency is soon discovered and then, what? He is told in most cases that there is not enough work to keep him busy.

If an employer knows that the blind person is incompetent, he should tell him so in order that he may receive the proper training. If this is not done, he seeks employment elsewhere and may be fortunate enough to find it. Of course, in time, the same thing happens again. This naturally reflects upon the blind operators as a class, and as a result, they are judged as unable workers.

I repeat most emphatically that blind operators should be *thoroughly* trained and, if they are found not to be so trained, they should be told to obtain the necessary training, for it is only in this way that the problem of securing employment for competent blind workers will be made easier.

My Work With a Large Correspondence School

By Alice M. Bannon
International Correspondence Schools
Scranton, Pennsylvania

This institution is probably the largest of its kind in the world and its instruction extends as far as the mails can reach. We have over three hundred courses and are continually adding new ones. The Instruction Department, the largest in the institution, contains the different schools. Each school has its own principal and staff of instructors. Besides this department, there are others connected with correspondence work, such as Stenographic, Illustrating, Field Service and Legal. The latter department deals with students who try to evade payment.

I work for the Field Service Division and write to students all over the United States and Canada. The work of the department is to "'chase after"

delinquent students—those who will not study their lessons and are negligent about making payment on their courses. I write some pretty strict letters at times. The letters which are sent to students are dictated through an Edison dictating machine. Each district has a representative who collects the payments and gives a report of the work that the student is doing. When a student writes to the Schools the letter is copied on the typewriter and sent to the representative having charge of his district and such letters are dictated to me. Some of the letters are rather difficult on account of poor English and spelling.

Besides writing to students and making copies of their letters for our representatives in the various districts, I have other styles of correspondence, such as notes to the different principals, written on what is termed "Inter-Office Paper." Special notes to representatives in answer to their reports are written on another kind of paper and as each style of paper has its own particular letterhead, I have quite a number of these to carry in my mind.

With each letter, I use two carbon copies. One goes to the representative and the other to the files. When a record is sent to me, it is accompanied by all the correspondence concerning that record. When my work with regard to a particular letter is finished, I attach the correspondence to my carbon copy for the files and then clip together all the letters pertaining to the particular student. Each month the representatives send in their reports concerning the students in their respective districts and, where necessary, I write to the students, giving them "call downs" for non-payments or inattention.

In the stenographic department we are given credit for the number of lines we write each day. We are required to write four hundred and eighty lines, and for every five lines over that amount we are allowed a bonus of one cent, so that some of the girls make pretty good pay when their bonus is added. Twice a day we make out a report for the Field Service Division, giving the number of letters written since noon the day before and also the number of lines. This report is then sent to the Field Service Division where all the lines are recounted. In this way cheating is avoided and no bonus won that is not honestly earned. At night we make out another report for the head of the stenographic department, giving the record for the day.

The Standard Dictionary is used here and is considered by the Schools to be more up-to-date than the Webster. I found that I had to change the spelling of many words used in our letters, such as those in which double consonants occur. Many hyphens are also eliminated. It was a little difficult at first, but now nothing of this kind bothers me, as we make such frequent changes that they have become second nature. I was considered a good speller at school, but I had to start all over again when I came here! My salary has been raised twice since my coming and my dictators have all given me great praise for my good work. One gentleman tells me that I am a credit to the Schools and that he enjoys having me work for him. Blindness, you see, is no bar to success.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Scranton, Pa.

November 22, 1924

Charles B. Hayes, Director
American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

In acknowledgment of your letter of November 22, regarding Miss Alice Bannon, she is employed under the direction of C. L. Ottinger, Director of the Stenographic Department, who assigns operators to the various Divisions of this Institution. It so happens that the services of Miss Bannon are assigned to the Division over which I have direction.

I am pleased to say that the work of Miss Bannon is very satisfactory indeed, and equal, if not superior, to that of operators who have the free use of their eyesight. Her work is very neat and accurate and gives entire satisfaction in every way. Mr. Ottinger, I believe, will send you a letter of recommendation.

Yours truly,
C. A. Drum,
Manager, Service Division, F.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Scranton, Pa.

November 24, 1924

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Miss Alice M. Bannon, has been employed as a Dictaphone Operator in the Stenographic Department of the International Correspondence Schools since June 14, 1920, and is capable of doing very satisfactory work.

C. L. Ottinger,
Manager, Stenographic Dept.

A Proven Success

By Mary I. Curran
Crompton and Knowles Loom Works
Massachusetts

The subject of dictaphone operating as an occupation for the blind is one which in my opinion, cannot be handled in a few words. However, I will do my best to bring out those points which, after six years in this line of work, seem to me to be most important.

When we stop and consider the requisites of a good dictaphone operator, we find that in the last analysis, these requirements resolve themselves into the following—

1. Absolute concentration.
2. Intelligent comprehension.
3. Memory.
4. Sound English foundation.
5. Accuracy and speed in typewriting.

These qualifications are as essential to the operator with sight as to the one without, and are as easily acquired by one as the other. Hence, when we come to look at the question in this light, it is apparent that the blind person has the same chance to make good as a sighted competitor.

This may sound more theoretical

than practical, but that factor which transforms the case from one of purely theoretical truth to one of practical reality, is the ability of the operator without sight to adjust himself to conditions as he finds them in the business world, rather than trying to turn the current of things in his direction. He may possess all the essentials of a good dictaphone operator, but if he is to get the most benefit from his work and associates, he must give in return the best that is in him. It is only by forgetting the advantages that those about us have over us and working as though on common ground with them, that we can expect others to forget, and regard us in the same light as themselves.

For nearly six years I have been employed as a dictaphone operator at the Crompton and Knowles Loom Works in Worcester. The work done at this office is of a very technical nature, as it deals in detail with every phase of loom construction. Previous to my coming to Crompton and Knowles, I was employed for a brief time at the store of William Filene's Sons Company in Boston, and I found my new work a pleasant change from the simple letters of the Mail Order Department of that store.

My new work was presented to me in a very systematic, logical manner. I began by doing the least difficult cylinders, such as the simplest interoffice work, Traffic and Purchasing Department letters, and finally, the Sales Department work. Within a few months, I had tried cylinders from all departments—even from the most difficult dictators—with varying degrees of success, and it became a source of real satisfaction to me to realize how, after a time, the work which had at first seemed impossible to me, gradually grew more easy. During this time, I received plenty of encouragement from those in authority, but it was many months before I could assure myself that I was capable of satisfactorily doing the work. For the first year or more of my work at the Loom Works, I found my Braille slate invaluable. Every new address, name, loom part, etc., which came into my work and which I thought I might need again, was jotted down in Braille at odd moments. In this way I collected quite a fund of valuable information, which I probably would never have remembered otherwise, and thus was saved the embarrassment of repeatedly asking the same questions.

When a cylinder is given to me, the addresses, and perhaps the subjects of the letters to be written are read to me. If something new comes up in connection with the letters being written, I have the correspondence looked over more in detail, otherwise I rely upon the cylinder entirely. The cylinders which are generally assigned to me, as one of the senior operators in point of service, cover certain lines of sales work. They are quite technical, demanding constant and close thought. Accuracy rather than speed is required, and as speed is not the primary consideration at this plant, the work appeals to me most strongly. Sometimes I am glad to let down somewhat, and do some of the less difficult cylinders, but as a general thing, the less mechanical, more varied kind of work is more to my liking.

As a result of six years of experience, I should like to offer the follow-

ing suggestions for the benefit of those who may be contemplating filling positions of this kind:

Try to strike the happy medium between dependence and false pride. Don't waste time because you are too proud or afraid to ask for help when you really need it—everybody has to ask questions once in a while. On the other hand—don't get into the habit of expecting too much help, for you must remember that those about you have their work to do, as well as you.

There are many instances where you can be of help—by listening to a difficult place on a record; by furnishing such information as your neighbor may need and lack but which you may possess; by helping those who are less versed in grammar than you to improve awkward constructions so common with dictators. These are a few of the ways by which you can be of help to those with whom you work.

Interest yourself in the interests of your office-mates, so that you may have something else besides business routine in common with them.

Don't expect too many concessions, either from your dictators or from others with whom you may have dealings. Concessions may be all right in a small office, but in a large concern they are detrimental. In the long run, it is gratifying to reflect that you are working under exactly the same conditions as everyone else, and that the concern for whom you work does not feel it necessary to make special concessions in your behalf.

In conclusion, let me say that I consider dictaphone operating by the blind a proven success—beyond the shadow of a doubt. I believe that if each operator shows that she can do her work equally as well as her sighted companions, it will be a matter of only a few years before the present skepticism on the part of employers, which makes the placing of these operators so difficult, will be overcome. It is for those of us who are pioneers in this field of work to labor untiringly with this in view, realizing, that by so doing, we are benefiting the cause of the blind by *our* success, as well as proving an education and an inspiration to those about us.

Stick-to-it-iveness a Necessity

By Grace E. Keator
New York Association for the Blind
New York

After seventeen years' experience as a stenographer at The New York Association for the Blind I feel very strongly that the secretarial field undoubtedly holds possibilities for many blind people. Of course, there are difficulties, but these can be overcome by patience and stick-to-it-iveness.

As I was a pioneer in Braille shorthand, I was called upon to demonstrate the system which meant taking dictation from people in all lines of business and professions, and in their curiosity they tried all ways of testing and puzzling me. This was probably the hardest task with which I had to contend, but, of course, a blind stenographer in an ordinary business office would not have this to do. Another one of my troubles when I first began was learning to remember my last word when interrupted, but this is naturally overcome by experience.

Needless to say, secretarial work requires at least a high school education, a good command of English and above all, accurate typewriting, and I am sure that any blind person with the necessary qualifications could not fail.

Hope for the Earnest Worker

By Matilda E. Allison

Napa State Hospital, Imola, California.

THE talisman that opened the business world to me was the dictaphone, and cultivation of the qualities of conscientiousness and persistent attention to office routine have made it possible for me to triumph over obstacles which must be met and overcome by every blind person who ventures into the world of work.

Through the interest of the late alienist, Dr. A. W. Hoisholt, I was accepted for the position of clinical dictaphone operator at the Napa State Hospital, Imola, California, in 1914. Dr. Hoisholt did not believe that blindness would handicap me in the position that I sought, but he did think that it would be well-nigh impossible for me to command a salary equal to those earned by sighted persons for similar work. However, I was grateful for the opportunity, and went to my desk with a song in my heart, for was I not numbered among self-supporting blind men and women? Heart-searching retrospection reveals the past ten years as interesting and filled with valuable experiences worthy of sincere gratitude.

MATILDA E. ALLISON

My commencing salary was twenty

dollars a month and maintenance. I worked for two visiting doctors and one interne, and dictation included transcription of clinical data, such as summaries of mental and drug-habitue cases, correspondence, pathological dictation, autopsy reports, bacteriological summaries, etc. Today—dictation is given by six resident physicians, two attending physicians and the hospital secretary, and includes summaries of all incoming cases, pathological laboratory reports, routine correspondence and commercial dictation.

I am granted no concession on account of blindness. The nature of my work is such that I require none, and I deem it a privilege to be independent and self-supporting. With Thomas Carlyle I firmly attest that: "There is always hope for the man who earnestly and actually works."

The Way to Beat the Sighted Operator is to be Better Equipped

By Nora E. Gillette
New York State Commission for the Blind

Blind students who contemplate entering the business world as dictaphone operators should rid themselves of the erroneous idea, prevalent among blind persons, that *anyone* may become a dictaphone operator. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that an operator without sight requires broader and more intensive training than does a sighted competitor. Competition is keen in this field, and it is well that we should realize the fact.

Success in the dictaphone field demands the background of a high school education or its equivalent. Great stress must have been laid on the English branches—grammar, spelling, punctuation, composition, and letter form. Furthermore, a large vocabulary and a feeling for sentence and paragraph structure should have been cultivated.

It should be unnecessary to state that accuracy and speed in typing should have been attained before the use of the dictaphone is attempted. Intense concentration is needed in order to understand some dictation, and all elemental difficulties should be removed before dictation is commenced. Establish the rule never to write anything that does not make sense. Doubtful transcription may arouse question concerning your intelligence. From the employer's standpoint questions are more tolerable than mistakes. Ask questions when unfamiliar words, phrases and technical terms are likely to form a trap for you. A brief sketch of my own experiences as a dicta-

NORA E. GILETTE

phone operator may help to illustrate some of the salient points mentioned.

My training was received at the New York State School for the Blind at Batavia, New York. In January, 1913, I started my business career as dictaphone operator and typist with William C. Moore & Company, Retail Nurserymen of Newark, New York. Four weeks of trial led to a satisfactory conclusion, and I was given an immediate raise in salary. Gradually, the initial difficulties, which are involved in first adventures into the business world, commenced to lose their magnitude, and the kindly interest of my employers and associates helped me to meet the required standard in quality and quantity of output. During the six years of my employment with William C. Moore & Company, I received several salary increases, and I shall always feel that the splendid experience gained there formed the first stepping stone to all further success.

In November, 1919, when the New York State Commission for the Blind decided to employ a dictaphone operator at their headquarters in New York City, I was granted a provisional appointment. I later took the necessary State Civil Service Examination and passed. Thus I became a regular employee of New York State.

I have found an embossed card catalogue of frequently used names and addresses an invaluable aid. Such a catalogue overcomes the necessity of appeal for sighted assistance. Changes in address are automatically turned over to me as they come in, and in this way my address file is reliable and up-to-date. I can be of assistance in sending telephone messages, and I record all such transactions for the office files. All telephone numbers are memorized, so that I can transmit messages as readily as can the sighted person. The Dial Telephone System has been installed in our office, and I found it easily masterable by concentration on the order in which figures and letters occur on the dial. I understand that other blind persons have learned to use the Dial System, so all doubt regarding the ability of the blind to deal with this new method should be eliminated.

In conclusion, let me say that a pleasant personality, neatness of appearance, promptness and conscientiousness are required for success in business. One meets all types of people, and it is often necessary to adapt one's self to varying temperaments and environment. As you continue your business career, your judgment will become sounder, your knowledge broadened, your personality richer and your faith in the final outcome surer.

How Far Does Salary Figure in Success?

EMMA L. CARR
United Shoe Machinery Company
Boston, Massachusetts

How far does salary figure in estimating success? Mrs. Emma L. Carr of the United Shoe Machinery Company, Boston, Massachusetts, earns twenty-five dollars a week and has five employee shares in the corporation.

It is estimated that the earnings of the average sighted typist range between twenty-two and twenty-five dollars per week, so Mrs. Carr com-

pares favorably with her sighted contemporaries.

Mrs. Carr commenced work at ten dollars a week and has averaged a steady salary increase. Changes have occurred in the department where she is employed, but she has remained at her post and now ranks as the one who has been in the department longest of all employees.

UNITED SHOE MACHINERY CORPORATION
Boston, Massachusetts

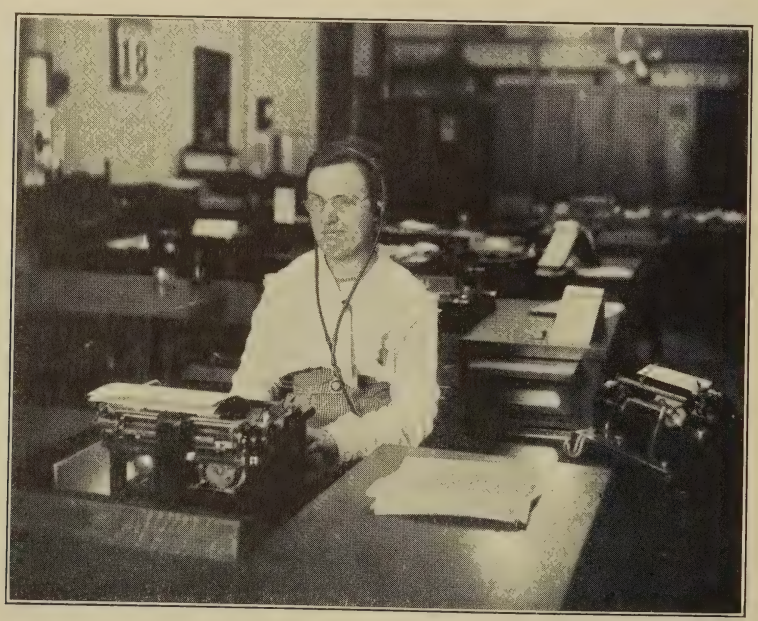
October 10, 1924.

Mr. Charles B. Hayes,
American Foundation for the Blind,
41 Union Square, West
New York City.

My dear Sir:

When Mrs. Carr entered our employ, over six years ago, she was wholly without experience as a dictaphone operator, though well trained as a typist. After about three days' training by the Ediphone Company she was pronounced ready for our work, and she was placed in this department under the supervision of the writer.

A short trial was sufficient to prove her ability, and we felt justified in offering her a fair salary such as would be paid to a beginner with sight. She had the advantage of a good knowledge of English, and was keenly appreciative of the opportunity to compete with others. She is very accurate in her typing and quickly responsive to suggestion, and on the whole, her work requires no more supervision than is given to those who work with her. She prides herself on being able to take care of her machine, even to putting on a new ribbon; gets her own supplies from stock, and is able to use cor-



EMMA L. CARR

rectly various kinds and colors of paper without assistance when she has been once shown about them. She has proven adaptable, in other words, and has made satisfactory progress.

Our experience with Mrs. Carr would indicate that this field of operation is open to the blind.

Very truly yours,
UNITED SHOE MACHINERY CORPORATION
(Miss) M. L. EMERSON
Stenographic Department

Don't Be Late

By HARRIET C. TUTTLE

Phoenix Fire Insurance Company, Hartford, Connecticut

Born in a country town of Connecticut, I received little formal education until I reached the age of thirteen. Twice I attempted to do the work of the public school, but—though I had some vision I was unable to compete successfully with children of normal sight. My parents were unaware that I could be received as a pupil by a school for the blind, and when this information finally reached them, I was already thirteen years old.

When I entered the Connecticut School for the Blind, I was below the standard on account of previous lack of schooling, but I was eager to learn, and advanced rapidly. After a few years, I was accepted as a pupil by the Perkins Institution and School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts. There I completed my high school course.

The autumn following my graduation from Perkins, I returned there to reside, while I pursued a business course at the Burdette Business College in Boston. For some years past, I had studied typewriting, and, after three months instruction in English, spelling, the use of the dictaphone and additional practice in typewriting, I was ready to try for a position.

A trial at The Phoenix Fire Insurance Company in February, 1920, developed into a permanency, and I have now been there for the past four years and several months. There have been regular increases in salary—proof that my work has been satisfactory.

My partial vision has helped me quite materially and everyone has been considerate and helpful.

My advice to other dictaphone operators may be summed up in one word—prepare. Get ready to meet your work, then—go out and meet it.

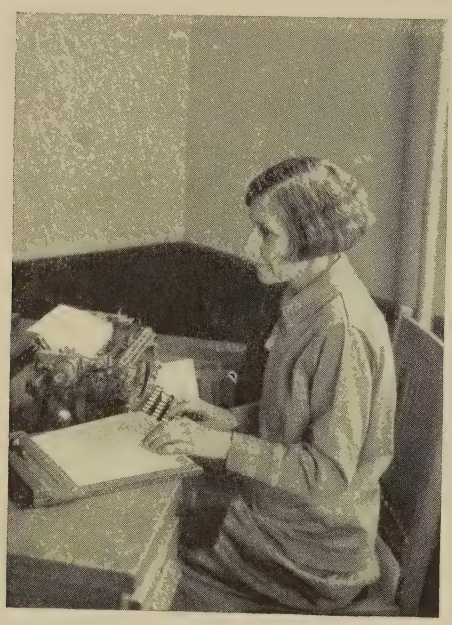
Aids Mother, Self and Church

By MARY A. RISSER

Babson Statistical Organization, Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts

Imagine a woman—blind, middle-aged and untrained, who had never been forced to do any work, suddenly bereft of her father, and left without visible means of support for herself and a dependent mother. Such was the situation in which I found myself a few years ago, and there was need of high faith and good courage. There was only one thing to do—go to work. Yet—what could an untrained blind person do in a world of trained and efficient workers? I appealed to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and my case was taken under advisement.

In order to secure for me a rating that would entitle me to go ahead with a business education, the Commission placed me with the American Mica Corporation at Newton Lower Falls in October, 1918. In February, 1919, convinced that I possessed the ambition and ability necessary for further business training, the Commission entered me at the Chandler Business College, Boston, Massachusetts, and in May, 1919, I was able to go to work at the Babson Statistical Organization, Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, and have retained my place there to the present date.



MARY A. RISSER

My commencing salary was only ten dollars a week, but—I had become a cog in the great wheel of the world's industry. Discouragement had been put to rout, and ambition and enthusiasm established. The gulf of difficulty had been crossed by the bridge of high faith and good courage, and the path of achievement lay invitingly ahead.

Since entering the Babson organization, I have been able to support myself and my mother, and have given one-tenth of my income to church and religious work. I have also managed to invest five hundred dollars in the preferred stock of the Babson Park Company, and have saved six hundred and eighty-five dollars from my salary. During the last two years, my income has been over one thousand dollars a year. This has been made possible by the generous profit-sharing plan in force at the Babson organization. Incidentally, I am the only means of support for my mother.

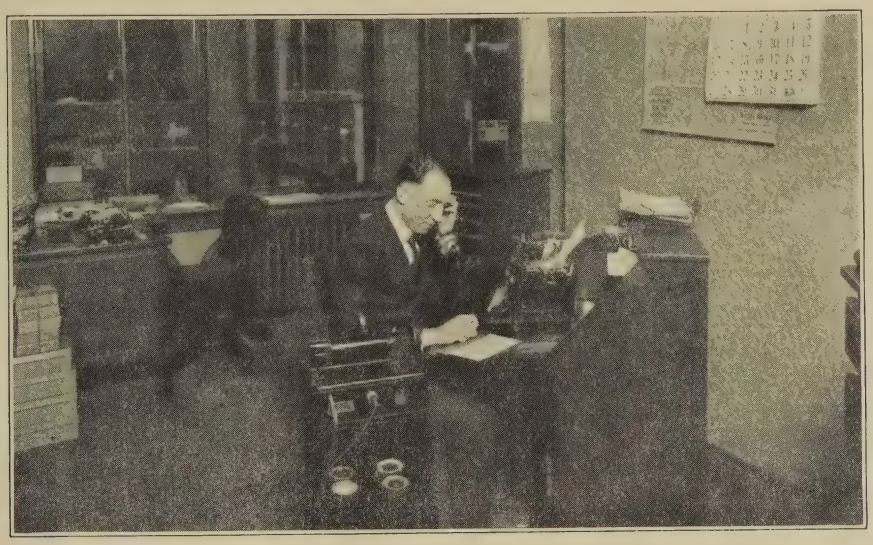
I love my work and find it a source of great comfort and joy. I have proven that blind persons may fill positions in the industrial world with equally satisfactory results as sighted ones, and that handicap does not necessarily preclude one from entering the magic circle where acceptable service is rendered, and "the laborer is worthy of his hire."

Wesley Calvin Stevens

By GEORGINA E. TRAINOR

Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Wesley Calvin Stevens was born in the old city of Alleghenny before it became a part of Pittsburgh. He lost his sight in early infancy, and at the age of six, he was entered at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind of Pittsburgh. He graduated from the literary department of the school in June, 1918, and in the autumn of the same year, he entered the University of Pittsburgh as a special student.



WESLEY CALVIN STEVENS

During the years at the university, Mr. Stevens specialized in the study of English literature and short-story writing. His great ambition is to become a short-story writer, but he realizes that even the world's greatest literary geniuses sometimes starve while they wait for recognition, so he chooses a safer way of earning a livelihood while he waits for the stories written during leisure hours to bring him financial success.

On leaving the university, he was employed in the office of the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, where he operates the private telephone exchange and transcribes from the dictaphone. Mr. Stevens is an accurate and speedy dictaphone operator.

Never Say "I Can't"—You Can!

By ANNA M. WALSH
Division of the Blind,
Boston, Massachusetts

For the past seven years I have been employed as a dictaphone operator in the office of the Massachusetts Division of the Blind. My education was received at the Perkins Institution and School for the Blind, Watertown, Massachusetts. I studied typewriting during the last four years at Perkins. I found that I could never make a success at music, so I substituted typewriting for two reasons—it helped to fill my spare hours and it interested me. I received one lesson a week and spent about an hour a day in practice. We followed a regular course of lessons used by one of the business schools of Boston. After leaving Perkins, I remained at home for five years, and during that time I used the typewriter merely for personal correspondence.

When preparing for my present position, I trained under one of the stenographers at this office. I had received a good foundation in typewriting and needed only practice in accuracy and speed. There was quite a lot for me to learn, however, par-

ticularly in the matter of letter form. Dictaphone work requires a good deal of concentrative ability, and for a long time it made me extremely nervous to write a letter of any length, as I kept expecting to make mistakes. In our work of maintaining a register of all blind people in Massachusetts, I wrote to every city and town in the State, and in this way became familiar with spelling the names of such cities and towns as had previously proved difficult to remember. I try to make a practice of writing in Braille such words as I find hard to spell, and in this way I am able to refer to them when necessary. It is my practice to keep a Braille record of names and addresses which I am apt to use frequently.

My work consists of the transcription of letters and reports from the dictaphone and some straight dictation on the typewriter. I much prefer the dictaphone, as it saves my time and that of the dictator. When I am interrupted, I find it a great help to keep my finger on the last letter written. People often ask me if I ever make mistakes. Being human—*of course I make mistakes*—but, being blind—I make a great effort to write accurately, as I cannot correct my own mistakes.

It has always seemed to me that an interest in the work is most essential, both for one's own contentment and happiness and for the welfare of the work. My interest does not lie in mere typewriting from the dictaphone, but in the people about whom I write. It may be that this work would not appeal to me if I were obliged to write about machinery or groceries, as some of our operators have to do. I have also been fortunate in having ready help and co-operation of my associates in the office.

Whenever a blind operator is placed, whether it be in the office of a State Division of the Blind, or an outside office, the interest of at least one member of the stenographic force is necessary in the beginning, if success is to be attained.

Doing Our Part

By Margaret Sewell Ryan
Crocker-Wheeler Company, Ampere, N. J.

We blind dictaphone operators are convincing the industrial world of today that we are assets rather than liabilities. A few years ago, the blind dictaphone operator was almost unknown. Today—we are everywhere. The business phonograph has opened to us an ever increasing opportunity, and we must see to it that we use the opportunity to the limit, by maintaining high standards, and by being constantly alert for ways and means of self-improvement. We must become an essential part of the particular business in which we find ourselves.

My own particular bit of service lies in the order department of the Crocker-Wheeler Company at Ampere, New Jersey. I came here in the autumn of 1919, at which time I was placed in the "Job Room," and from there I graduated to my present place in the order department. In this department there are nine dictators and one other blind operator besides myself. We find our dictators considerate and generally well satisfied with our work.

We have discovered that the electrical vocabulary has no limit, but

MARGARET SEWELL RYAN

we are now quite at home amid the technical terms, and easily handle the correspondence of the department. In order to work as independently as possible, we have evolved our own system for keeping cylinders in their proper sequential rotation, and have also learned to avoid confusion of folders in which papers belonging to the dictators are located. We have conquered technicalities, and are free to enjoy our work.

To those starting out in the dictaphone field, I say—be adequately prepared; be alert; be a conscious part of a working organization. Earn the right to say—"I am not a shirker, but a worker. I am doing my bit in a working world. I am a necessary part of a great whole." It is thus that content, happiness and success are acquired—by doing our part.

Getting On

By Anna O'Neil
R. H. Macy, New York

Difficulties once overcome cease to be difficulties—they are then but stepping stones toward achievement. The goal having been reached, one does not look backward toward failure, but forward toward new fields for conquest. It has been so in my experiences in the field of dictaphone operating—there have been the usual difficulties always experienced in fitting one's self for a particular work, but these have been forgotten, and I now welcome new obstacles as possibilities for further triumph.

In 1916, I graduated from the literary and industrial department of the New York State School for the Blind at Batavia, and in the spring of 1917, secured a position as dictaphone operator with a commercial concern in Newark, New Jersey. The monetary reward was small, but the position afforded actual office experience which was of more importance than a larger salary would have been. Shortly after my employment, an industrial slump occurred, and my position terminated within six months. The disappointment was great, but there was just enough enjoyment from the thrill of working with sighted people and earning my own living, to make me realize how important it was to be employed all the time.

The next winter was spent in Albany, where I was busy most of the time. The dictaphone company there made earnest effort in my behalf and succeeded in locating substitute positions for me, one of them at the Chamber of Commerce, where the War Chest and Liberty Loan Campaigns were launched. I was glad to have these temporary opportunities of furthering my experience.

In the autumn of 1918, I came to New York, and have been employed here ever since. I am now with the firm of R. H. Macy and Company, and my three and a half years of work for them have been evidently satisfactory

My message to other dictaphone operators is just this: Obstacles are the necessary implements of achievement. Their value depends on your attitude toward them. Do not let them overcome you. Learn to use them, and so go forward to the success that comes only to those who convert their difficulties into stepping stones that lead to the goal of their desire. *Watch for the stepping stones.*

We Must Educate the Public To Believe In Us

AGNES HAMILTON
Fidelity and Casualty Company, Illinois

After leaving the State School for the Blind at Batavia, New York, in June, 1920, I came down to the office of the New York State Commission for the Blind to get some practical experience in dictaphone and office work under the instruction of Miss Nora Gillette, dictaphone operator at the Commission office. After I had been there for several weeks, the hunt for a position commenced. One concern after another expressed interest in the welfare of the blind, but there was always some excuse offered for inability to employ a blind person.

About the middle of September, the Fidelity and Casualty Company of New York consented to give me a two weeks' trial. My ability was proved, and I have been in my present position ever since.

The Fidelity and Casualty Company occupies two entire buildings, and I am in the stenographic department, the largest, and by far the noisiest one in the building. There are about eighty-four girls in the room, operating dictaphones, typewriters, billing machines and mimeographs. I take the dictation of the adjusters in the claim department and find it extremely interesting. My work consists largely of reports, with

an occasional letter and memorandum. I use the Columbia dictaphone and a Remington No. 12 typewriter. We work on the half-a-cent-a-line piece basis and I really feel that I earn my salary. We register on a time-clock, so promptness and regularity are essential to our success here.

I have made many friends in this office. The girls are all jolly and obliging, and I greatly appreciate the consideration and thoughtfulness shown to me on all occasions.

I trust that this brief account of my work will serve to help make the way a little easier for someone else who contemplates entering the same line of work. I firmly believe that dictaphone operating is a field that presents broad possibilities to the properly trained and ambitious blind person. We must, by efficient work, educate the public to belief in our ability.

Make Your Own Sunshine

By Sarah Getz
Keystone Steel and Wire Company,
Peoria, New York

I was born in Peoria, but when I was very small, my parents moved out West. There I entered the Utah School for the Blind and graduated in 1917. At school I learned to operate a typewriter, but was not efficient enough to warrant my attempting a stenographer's position. As I had long been decided that dictaphone operating presented a likely field for the blind worker, I entered the Smithsonian Business School of Shorthand in the autumn of 1917.

I was the first sightless pupil to enter that institution and had some difficulty in gaining admission, but, after due consideration, I was accepted as a trial pupil.

My work was not hard, but very new, as I had been brought up among sightless children and naturally was rather timid when thrown among so many sighted people, and expected to compete with them on equal footing.

In four months' time I received my stenographer's diploma, and in March, 1918, came to Peoria, where I entered the employ of the Keystone Steel & Wire Company on April first.

I never shall forget those first weeks of nerve-trying endeavor. I was the only blind person among a crowd of two hundred employees. Stenography was my life dream and I was beginning to realize it, so I stuck tight to it. The girls were all very good to me—that was just it, everybody wanted to help me too much. I had been taught at school to do things for myself, and now, every move I made, there were a dozen pairs of hands to help. This was all out of kindness, I know, but it made me the more conscious of my handicap and the more determined to overcome it.

My work began in the Sales Department, transcribing letters which were given over the Edison dictating machine. The first week I wrote twenty-eight letters. Everyone in the office thought that was remarkable, but I was humiliated, for I had expected to do more than that. By June, I was well acquainted with my line of work and was averaging forty and fifty letters per day.

I had been brought up on a Remington typewriter, and in this office

the Royals were being used at that time. It took some little time to familiarize myself with the new machine, and when I thought I had overcome that, a sudden change was made and Underwoods were installed. This was easy, as I had learned to use the Underwood while at the Business College. In fact, my best dictaphone tests were made with the Underwood machine, and I had received two certificates, one for forty-eight words per minute and the other for sixty words per minute.

Two years later, another change was made in typewriters, and this time the Woodstock was installed. This machine had the same standard keyboard, but required an adjustment in my formula. This took a few days and naturally reduced my speed. About a year and a half ago, the climax was capped when the company installed the new Noiseless typewriters. All the stenographers around me declared that Sarah surely could not learn to use this machine. The office manager was going to be kind to me and let me keep my little Woodstock, as I seemed to be doing very well with it, and it seemed that the stenographers were having such a hard time in getting accustomed to the new Noiseless that he would not cause me such difficulties, but when I heard that remarks were being made to the effect that here was a machine I could not master, I requested that I be permitted to try.

The representative of the Noiseless Typewriter Company brought a demonstrating machine out to my home on a Tuesday evening and let me examine the machine carefully, and called off the keyboard to me once. The following day he came out to my home and gave me dictation direct to the machine for about two hours, and in this time of writing I made one typographical error. The next day I had a Noiseless machine put on my desk at the office and transcribed twenty-two letters. By the following Monday, I was writing sixty letters per day and was as happy and contented as if I had never made a change in machines.

My reason for telling you this is to confirm my belief that blind girls should be taught the use of all machines while yet in school. They should also be taught how to care for the machines.

I sort all my correspondence and make all literature enclosures, etc. This is very simple if the dictator is careful in inserting the proper correspondence when dictating the records. I clean my own machines, put on new ribbons, and go about the office as I please. I am perfectly contented and happy at my work. I have been with the Keystone Company for six and a half years and have enjoyed harmony with employers and fellow employees. My motto is "love and radiate sunshine, and sunshine will come back, brighter for efforts."

I Believe In Dictaphone Operating As a Profession For the Blind

By Marion C. Sibley
Oklahoma

Since coming to Oklahoma, I have substituted in the dictaphone department of the *Daily Oklahoman,* the largest newspaper in the state. For a time I was also with the Agricul-

tural Department at the state capitol, and now I am with the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater.

The dictaphone is not much used in this part of the country and I do not use it in my present position. When there is much copy work to be done, I take dictation in shorthand on my Braille writer. Otherwise, all dictation is given to me at the tyewriter and I find that this method works well here.

In my three Oklahoma positions I have been in contact with hundreds of business and professional people, and have had considerable publicity. From a personal point of view, publicity has no appeal for me, but when it is considered from the angle of the possible service it may render, it is invaluable. Not long ago I was introduced to the governor of Oklahoma by the president of the State Board of Agriculture. This meeting may some day have its own effect on the question of the blind in industry; at least, I hope so.

My next position must be that of a dictaphone operator, for I am genuinely interested in the work, and I mean to follow it up even if I have to purchase my own machine. I believe in dictaphone operating as a profession.

Dorothy Hunter

Eastman Kodak Company,
Rochester, New York

Miss Dorothy Hunter is a dictaphone operator with the Eastman Kodak Company of Rochester, New York. She studied at the New York State School for the Blind at Batavia, New York.

Placed in the training department of the Eastman Kodak Company, Miss Hunter acquitted herself so creditably that she was shortly transferred to a regular department. She made steady progress and has had three salary increases.

Anna Beach

American Foundation for the Blind
New York

Miss Anna Beach has been employed as dictaphone operator at the American Foundation for the Blind for about a year. She obtained her first knowledge of typewriting and dictaphone transcription at St. Charles School, Fort Jefferson, New York. From there she went to the Headquarters for the Blind in Brooklyn, where she secured some necessary office practice. Following the Brooklyn training, she spent a month at Eastman Gaines and went from there to the New York State Commission for the Blind, where she was employed as a regular typist. The Commission recommended Miss Beach to the American Foundation.

Miss Beach is of a sunshiny and willing disposition and is well liked by all members of the Foundation family. We hope that she will be with us for a long while yet, and are sure that she will some day rank as one of our best blind dictaphone operators.

Editor's note—In this reprint from the Outlook, we publish a list of blind dictaphone operators who are today employed in twenty states of the Union. All of them are sincerely valued by their employers.

ANNA BEACH

Blind dictaphone operators should be employed in every one of the forty-eight states of the Union, instead of in twenty, as is true today. That the Canadian government is fully alive to the value of the blind operator is evidenced by the class of positions held by the Canadian operators who are listed in our Special Feature. Organizations for the blind in the United States must endeavor to place our trained operators in similarly worth-while positions in the government of our country. The preparation and qualifications of our operators must be such that business leaders will seek them out when there are really worth-while positions to be filled. We must establish the attitude that says—"if you want the work well done, get a blind operator." We *can* do it *if we will.*

Canadian Blind Dictaphone Operators

A New Activity for the Blind

By J. M. de Lassalle Gravelle
Toronto, Ontario

That secretarial duties can be satisfactorily fulfilled by blind persons is evidenced by the large number of blind men and women now engaged in the performance of such work. Although I am not a secretary, a stenographer, a typist or an office clerk, my work is so much akin to that performed by those holding such positions, and I have to handle such a large quantity of typewriting, filing, indexing, dictation and the like that I believe a rapid insight into my activities may serve to convince employers of the ability of blind persons to perform tasks heretofore considered as the exclusive privilege of sighted individuals.

About four years ago, after completing a course in shorthand and typewriting at "Pearson Hall," Toronto, Canada, and after some months of post graduate training in the office of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, I resolved to enter a line of activity rather unusual among the blind. It was a bold venture—the outcome of a feeling of independence that made me desire to be my own master and to show what the blind could do.

I became a translator of French into English and vice versa. I have succeeded in building up a business that yields me a pleasing income. In doing this I have not appealed to the community upon the ground of blindness, neither have I asked for pity; I have dealt with the business world in a business way only.

Like all blind persons engaged in work similar to mine, I am largely dependent on Braille text books and dictionaries, Braille shorthand and the dictaphone. The Braille system of shorthand is a wonderful one. It must be admitted, however, that the transcribing of Braille notes upon the typewriter is somewhat slower than the transcribing of the sighted stenographer's dashes and curves. The constant removal of the fingers from the typewriter's keyboard to the Braille dotted ribbon makes the progress more tedious, but will-power enables the typist to absolutely concentrate his mind on his work, to direct his energy and guide his movements in such a manner as to overcome the apparent handicap.

The blind typist plods steadily along and it is safe to believe that his thirty-five to forty words a minute—a very conservative estimate of his speed—results in just as satisfactory a day's work as does the higher speed of his sighted confrere who is very often tempted to *linger awhile* over his work. The blind typist is forced to concentrate intently on his work and finds little opportunity for philandering time.

In my opinion, the use of the dictaphone is preferable to Braille notes. Although the former requires just as much concentration as does the copying of notes, it permits greater speed in transcribing. A combination of both methods should prove advantageous. In my work I use Braille writ-

ing for labelling, indexing, account keeping, etc., but I have not the opportunity of using Braille shorthand to any great extent. I use the dictaphone almost constantly.

My system of handling work is simple. With the assistance of a reader or secretary I dictate into the dictaphone the copy to be translated, transfer the cylinder from the receiving to the repeating machine, listen to the copy being repeated phrase by phrase, and dictate the translation on another cylinder. This translation is again repeated by the machine and corrected, polished and revised until it has the necessary finish to permit of its being typed. The typing done, I have the translation read aloud to me in order to correct possible typographical errors and judge of it in a critical manner.

The dictaphone also proves to be of invaluable assistance to me in compiling, revising and putting into final shape newspaper and magazine articles and short stories, work to which I devote most of my spare time. From Braille notes—covering items of interest, incidents of pathos or humor, outlines of plots and their development, I dictate to a cylinder the rough draft of an article or short story. Then I revise and polish the writings until they are in shape to be accepted by publishers. I have thus added quite an acceptable amount to my income.

My achievements have, I think, a larger import than is discernible at first glance. They open a broader outlook than that of a private business venture more or less limited in scope. They show that whenever there is need for the assistance of a person possessing a knowledge of two or more languages, a *qualified* blind person is entirely capable of rendering satisfaction.

Translators and interpreters are required by large business houses, agencies, community service societies, organizations dealing with foreign countries or catering to foreign customers, hotels and resorts, publishing houses, transportation companies, legal firms and many other commercial and social agencies. Even in court rooms and diplomatic circles translators and interpreters are necessities, and the blind man who is trained for such posts need not fear to adventure forth into this new realm of activity for the blind.

The Sightless Person Is Not a Useless Appendage

By N. Topping
Ontario, Canada

My position is similar to that of the ordinary sighted stenographer. I use the Braille shorthand system and take dictation in Braille just as a sighted person takes it in pencil. I find Braille notes more satisfactory than the dictaphone. In dictaphone work, indistinct dictation is very trying. Braille notes afford direct dictation and in case of interruption, the stenographer can direct the dictator's attention to the last word or thought.

The blind stenographer must become thoroughly acquainted with the routine of office business. In this respect he is on an equal basis with the sighted worker. The danger of typographical errors may be lessened by decreased speed. Accuracy is more essential than speed and the latter must never be acquired at the expense of the former.

Wherever possible, the blind worker should avoid calling for sighted assistance for correction of errors. When I first commenced my work, instead of calling for help when I made an error, I re-wrote the subject matter at lessened speed. Thus, I gradually overcame inaccuracy and now no assistance is needed.

A sightless person is not a useless appendage in the commercial world and should not be set down in a corner until someone comes and takes him out. He should be afforded the training necessary to fit him to earn his own living in an acceptable way, and then he should be given at least an equal chance with sighted workers.

The Morse Code an Asset

By Charles F. Hornsby
Edmonton, Alberta

I am employed as a stenographer by the Provincial Government of Alberta and have had experience with both the dictaphone and the Braille system of shorthand. In the use of the dictaphone I find the Morse Code a great asset, as it eliminates mistakes in spelling since no two words sound the same in the Code. It is surprising what a difference the use of the Code has on the speed of the operator.

In order to ensure clean work on the typewriter, it is essential that the blind typist keep the machine free of dust and that the tabulator stops and paper guide be kept always in the same relative position. Neat erasures may be made, where necessary, by back-spacing to where the wrong key is struck, locking down the capital key, thus lifting the ribbon forks, and using a straight eraser on the letter which appears between the forks. Once the dictation is commenced, the typist should keep the fingers on the keys until finished.

When using the shorthand system, the stenographer should be careful to try the machine before dictation is started, in order to be sure that the ribbon runs smoothly.

I used to have difficulty in arranging a device for running the ribbon over the typewriter board for transcription, until I hit on the idea of putting two screw nails in the leg of the table in the same position as those on the shorthand machine. On these I placed the detachable arm containing the spool. A rubber band pinned down with drawing pins on either side of the typewriter board serves as a guide for the ribbon. This contrivance avoids damage to the dots on the Braille ribbon, which is often injured when spring steel is used for a guide.

Blind Typists Must Excel

By Catherine J. Curry
Canadian National Institute for the Blind,
Toronto, Ontario

Miss Catherine J. Curry is employed as a typist in the Head Office of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto, Ontario. She transcribes from the dictaphone and from Braille copy and takes straight dictation on the typewriter.

Miss Curry regards the cultivation of ability to concentrate intensively as a chief requisite to successful dictaphone operating and asserts that blind typists must determine from the very outset of their careers that they will be better typists than their sighted competitors.

Other Blind Girls May Obtain Similar Positions

By WINIFRED DAVIDSON
Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto, Canada

Miss Winifred Davidson, of the Head Office Staff, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto, was born blind and received her education at the Ontario School for the Blind at Brantford, from which she graduated in 1918. Immediately after her graduation, Miss Davidson secured a position as typist with the National Institute and has remained there.

Miss Davidson transcribes from the dictaphone and from Braille notes, fills out forms used in the office, files, keeps Braille files of correspondence, addresses and telephone numbers and operates the switchboard when the regular operator is at lunch. She thoroughly enjoys her work and hopes that many other blind girls may obtain similar situations.

List of Blind Dictaphone Operators and Typists in the United States and Canada

NEW YORK

Beach, Anna	American Foundation for the Blind	New York City
Bowers, Martha	Boy Scouts of America	New York City
Breiter, Edward E.	Educators' Association	New York City
Foley, Margaret	The Iron Age Publishing Company	New York City
Gillette, Nora E.	New York State Commission for the Blind	New York City
Hamilton, Agnes	Fidelity and Casualty Company	New York City
Hanrahan, Beatrice	McKinlay, Stone and Mackenzie	New York City
Hiller, Arnold	Spencer Trask Company	New York City
Hunter, Dorothy	Eastman Company	Rochester
Keator, Grace	New York Association for the Blind	New York City
Kuchler, Albert	Bonyuge and Gerber—also employed at Sidney Ormsby Company, Law Reporters	New York City
O'Neil, Anna	R. H. Macy	New York City

OHIO

Billow, Ruth	Akron Society for the Blind	Akron
Eaglen, Hazel	The Tropical Paint and Oil Company	Cleveland
Grafton, Cuma	The Union Trust Company	Cleveland
Grim, Frances	Burt Manufacturing Company	Akron
Haney, Bertha	The Cleveland Hardware Company	Cleveland
Haske, Edna	The Sheets Elevator Company	Cleveland
Jones, Pearl	Ohio State Commission for the Blind	Columbus
Kerr, Adelaide	Gibson Art Company	Cincinnati
McQuirk, Margaret	S. E. Maxwell Company	Cleveland
Norris, Isabel	The Standard Oil Company	Cleveland
Shaffer, Marie	Burch, Bacon and Denlinger	Cleveland
Slutz, Ella	Ohio State Commission for the Blind	Columbus
Westfall, Mary	National Cash Register Company	Dayton

MASSACHUSETTS

Carr, Emma	United Shoe Machinery Company	Boston
Curran, Mary	Crompton and Knowles Loom Works	Worcester
Goulloud, Edna	State Reformatory for Women	Sherburn
Holmberg, Arvid	Fisk Rubber Company	Chicopee Falls
Kennedy, Annie May	London Guarantee and Accident Company	Boston
Kimball, Eleanor	London Guarantee and Accident Company	Boston
McGill, Marie	Walworth Manufacturing Company	South Boston
Risser, Mary	Babson Statistical Institute	Wellesley Hills
Robertson, Olin	Maryland Casualty Company	Boston
Tansey, Frederick	S. S. Pierce Company	Boston
Walsh, Anna	Division of the Blind, Depart. of Education	Boston

PENNSYLVANIA

Bannon, Alice Maud.	International Correspondence School	Scranton
Burritt, Howard B.	Atlantic Refining Company	Philadelphia
Chamberlain, George.	R. G. Dun and Company	Philadelphia
Kelly, Genevieve	Scranton Correspondence School	Scranton
Roddy, Mary I.	Lippincott Company	Philadelphia
Sillman, David	Blumenthal Brothers	Philadelphia
Stevens, Wesley	Pennsylvania Association for the Blind	Pittsburgh

ILLINOIS

Anderson, Clara	Montgomery Ward and Company	Chicago
Crawley, Johanna	Name of Firm not listed	Chicago
Deutsch, Etta	Name of Firm not listed	Chicago
Getz, Sara	Keystone Wire Manufacturing Company	Chicago
Hill, Lena	Name of Firm not listed	Chicago
Manske, Amanda	Chicago Lighthouse	Chicago
Melcher, Augusta	Name of Firm not listed	Chicago
Nedell, Ruth	Montgomery Ward and Company	Chicago
Peterkin, Susie E.	Montgomery Ward and Company	Chicago
Peterson, May	Name of Firm not listed	Chicago
Reynolds, Grace	Dixon State Hospital	Dixon
Sirvotka, Mary	Chicago-Rock Island Railroad	Chicago
Slovinsky, Celia	Name of Firm not listed	Chicago
Smith, Irma	Montgomery Ward and Company	Chicago
Valentine, Pauline	Name of Firm not listed	Chicago

CALIFORNIA

Allison, Matilda E.	Napa State Hospital	Imola
Deckard, Everett	The John Manville Company	San Francisco
Decker, Edward	Name of Firm not listed	San Francisco
Hartman, Clorinda	Baker, Hamilton and Pacific Company	San Francisco
Lambert, George	Dictaphone Exchange	San Francisco
Ward, Marie	Lessman Practical Business School	San Francisco

MINNESOTA

Hake, Bessie May	Federal Reserve Bank	Minneapolis
Hineline, Marion	Pillsbury Mills	Minneapolis
Nelsen, Lillie	Montgomery Ward and Company	St. Paul

TENNESSEE

Eagan, Sue Parker	George Peabody College for Teachers	Nashville
Herndon, Gladys	Fiske University	Nashville
Menuskin, Annie	Grand Hotel	Chattanooga

WISCONSIN

Cornell, Blanche	Phoenix Knitting Company	Milwaukee
O'Connell, Eleanor	American Appraisal Company	Milwaukee
Schmidt, Edna	American Appraisal Company	Milwaukee

CONNECTICUT

Lippman, Lena	Trades Department for the Blind	Hartford
Tuttle, Harriet C.	Phoenix Insurance Company	Hartford

MISSOURI

Koenker, Genevieve.	Missouri Commission for the Blind	St. Louis
Newman, Mary	Missouri Commission for the Blind	St. Louis

NEW JERSEY

Lewis, Jessie	Crocker-Wheeler Electrical Company	Ampere
Ryan, Margaret	Crocker-Wheeler Electrical Company	Ampere

COLORADO

Luce, Lotta	St. James Hotel	Denver

DELAWARE

Munis, Raymond H.	DuPont Company	Wilmington

KENTUCKY

Gortney, Oscar	Police Court	Harrodsburg
Thompson, Carrie M.	Name of Firm not listed	Mount Vernon

MAINE

Lynch, W. L.	Maine Institution for the Blind	Portland

MONTANA

Oxford, Lucy	Name of Firm not listed	Missoula

NEW MEXICO

Opdyke, Fannie	The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Ry. Co.	Albuquerque

RHODE ISLAND

Gadbois, Rose	Builders' Iron Foundry	Providence

SOUTH CAROLINA

Street, James	Southeastern Life Insurance Company	Greenville

CANADA

A. A. Archibald	Department of Forests and Mines Province of British Columbia	Victoria
Curry, C.	Canadian National Institute for the Blind	Toronto
Davidson, W.	Canadian National Institute for the Blind	Toronto
Hogan, O.	Dept. of Neglected Children Prov. of Alberta	Edmonton
Hornsby, C. F.	Dept. of Municipal Affairs, Prov. of Alberta	Edmonton
Rawlinson, J. H.	Canadian Department of Immigration	Overseas Office
Topping, N.	Department of Asylums and Penitentiaries, Province of Ontario	Toronto

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